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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF DISTRIBUTION  
5 South Wabash Avenue  
Chicago 3, Illinois

SWEET POTATOES

Containers: Sweet potatoes may be received in barrels, hampers, crates or bushel baskets.

Receipt and Inspection: Sweet potatoes are generally shipped in standard refrigerator cars, un-iced. Vents should be kept closed when temperature falls to 32 degrees. Open vents above 32 degrees. Upon arrival of a car, receive and make examination in accordance with Official Memorandum 8-25-38, Re: Surplus commodities - 1. Shipment advice procedure. 2. Inspection of commodities upon arrival.

Storage: Several important factors must be observed if the most satisfactory results are to be obtained in the storage of sweet potatoes. (1) Particular care must be taken to avoid cutting, bruising, or otherwise injuring this commodity while placing in containers or moving to storage houses. (2) Injured roots showing evidence of disease must be carefully excluded from storage. (3) The storage house should be rat and mouse proof as far as possible. (4) Every consideration must be given to the condition of the warehouse. The storage house must be cool, dry, clean, and sanitary. It should be cleared of all old or decayed sweet potatoes or other debris and swept clean. In the event sweet potatoes are to be stored for a considerable length of time, it is advisable to thoroughly disinfect the warehouse.

The commercial varieties of sweet potatoes are the Big Stem Jersey, Yellow Jersey and Gold Skin, which are the best known of the dry-fleshed potatoes, while the Porto Rico, Nancy Hall, Dooley, Pumpkin "Yam" and Southern Queen are the best known of the moist-fleshed types. The Triumph is a medium-moist variety. Mainly through preference, the larger percentage of dry-fleshed varieties are grown in the Atlantic Coastal plain states, while most of the moist-fleshed potatoes are grown in the Southern region. The storing qualities of all varieties are about the same.

Avoid rehandling during storage. It was formerly believed that sorting and removing the rotting specimens would prevent the spread of rots, but experimental studies have proved the opposite to be true. Sorting and handling cause some bruising of the roots and at the same time spread the rot organisms about so that the newly-injured surfaces become infected. It has been observed that sweet potatoes exposed to the nibbling of rats and mice decay much more than those not so exposed. The rodents not only injure the roots but doubtless cause a further increase in rotting by carrying the rot organisms about over the stored material. Therefore, all vents in the warehouse should be screened with  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh galvanized wire cloth. Doors or other openings through which the rats or mice might enter during ventilating periods should also be screened, and under sides of the flooring covered with screening or other resistant material.

When sweet potatoes are packed in crates, and so stored, a slat floor raised four inches from the main floor should be provided in order to allow air circulation under the crates and they should be stacked in even rows to the height of eight feet. A satisfactory method is to stack each row of crates on two 2-by-4 pieces, set on edge, parallel to each other, and about one foot apart, thus permitting ventilation under the crates. In this way, the pieces act as a substitute for a slat

floor. It is important to do this in order to protect the roots in the first row of crates.

Temperature: Field sweet potatoes or sweet potatoes that have not been kiln dried or cured may be kept in ideal ordinary storage for 1 to 2 weeks provided that a temperature between 40 and 80 degrees is maintained. Kiln dried or cured sweet potatoes may be stored under these same conditions from 2 to 4 weeks. In every case, the store room must be kept clean and the humidity reasonably low.

No attempt should be made to store field (uncured) sweet potatoes for long periods. To obtain satisfactory results, storage temperature for cured sweet potatoes must be kept at from 50 to 55 degrees. Sweet potatoes are a more perishable product than Irish potatoes, but under proper storage conditions they will keep in good condition for about four months. The maintenance of too high temperature will cause excessive shrinkage, and letting the temperature fall too low may cause far more disastrous results. The sweet potato is very sensitive to low temperature and will not survive temperature within many degrees of freezing.

Processing: The recipient generally furnishes the container for this commodity. If not, standard paper bags of sufficient size to accomodate the distributions shall be used.